C. Brady

C. Brady

A Painting of Fern Prairie
From a photo by Kathering Fay Hunt

Reflections
Jeffrey Hunt
Jannary 2 2026

This painting comes from my grandmother, Katherine Hunt. Painted by Christine Brady on a standard 8 × 10 ply canvas foundation board, it appears to have been commissioned—or at least arranged—by my grandmother, likely through a friend from church. The image itself was painted from a photograph she took, a favorite photo of hers.

The painting depicts the back field or pasture behind my parents' house in Fern Prairie. The property was about seven acres total. More than half of that was open grass and pasture, with the remaining area wooded—brush, trees, and natural undergrowth. Parts of it were genuinely wild and woodsy.

Katherine Hunt graduated from Camas High School in 1926. For most of my childhood, I thought of her as being from Portland. I didn't fully appreciate that she was originally from Camas until much later. She had moved to Portland just after she was married, straight out of high school, and later lived near Alpenrose Dairy on Vermont. We visited regularly—usually on Sundays. My dad, Mahlon, was born in Portland in 1930.

During summers, she would live with us for a week or more at a time—just folding into daily life, visiting, being around. It was nice having her there. I didn't realize then how much I would miss that opportunity later.

I have an album full of photographs of her and her friends around Camas. I remember sitting down with her once, a long time ago in Portland, and going through several albums together. She was quite elderly by then, but she really enjoyed looking through them with me. It's a perfect example of how information is lost—someone has to take the time, make the connection. Sometimes it only happens once.
The house shown in the painting is my parents' house—the family house. You can see daisies in the tall grass. I spent hours out there. I remember moving to that house when I

C. Brady

was entering fifth grade at Lacamas Heights Elementary. Mrs. Koski. It was a wonderful place to grow up—forest and fields.

My parents really stretched to purchase the property, moving there from Oak Park. I can't remember the exact price—maybe $17,500, maybe closer to $19,000—but I remember clearly that it was a stretch. My dad worked on the aniline crew at the bag factory. Originally, I believe there was just a small one-bedroom house on the property that had been added onto over the years. I think the land donation originally belonged to the Johnstons. There was a small two-story brick Johnston house across the street from us where the Lehr's later lived.

Holding this painting in my hand now, I'm looking at my boyhood home. In front of us, the daisies and tall grass. Behind and to the left, the back field and prairie—stretching back toward Livingston. Land that no longer really exists anymore.

There were once six prairies in Clark County—Lacamas, Brush, Fir, Fourth Plain, Chelatchie, and Fern Prairie among them. They've mostly been covered over now. Housing developments marching on. Firm lines on maps. Development pressure. What's shown in this painting is disappearing—or has disappeared entirely.
It's really only memory now.

C. Brady

Painted by
Christine Brady, 1979 - Portland, Ore.
292-9841

Mahlon Hunt's pasture, at Camas, Wash. from
Snapshot by Katherine Hunt.